

# NATO Stability Teams

## The Next Stage of Capability Development

By ANNE M. MOISAN and JENNIFER D.P. MORONEY

**T**he North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has achieved important strides in capabilities since the Prague and Istanbul Summits: the first functional NATO command, Allied Command Transformation, was stood up; the NATO Response Force is on track for full operational capability in fall 2006; deployable headquarters realignment is complete; new missions out of area have been taken on; completion of Stabilization Force, Bosnia, and turnover of the mission to the European Union (EU) have occurred; and training help has been provided for Iraqis. In addition, current operations in or in support of Afghanistan and Iraq, preparations for United Nations (UN) negotiations on the final status of Kosovo, and the search for a peaceful resolution to the Iran nuclear standoff are forcing the Allies to redefine NATO's core missions and to find ways to reenergize the transatlantic link. Likewise, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the Madrid train bombing, and the transit blasts in London have led to new types of missions, brought new meaning to Article V in combating terrorism, and raised questions about the NATO role in Transatlantic Homeland Security. With the dramatic shift in operational requirements to stabilization and reconstruction missions, the need to counter terrorism, and the prospect of expanded missions in homeland defense and support to civil authorities in homeland security, the demand for combat support and combat service support (CS/CSS)-type capabilities has increased exponentially.

Despite all it has accomplished, NATO is now approaching Act II of this 21<sup>st</sup>-century

drama, where transformation faces critical new challenges. From the strain of supporting out-of-area deployments in the Balkans and Afghanistan, and with the growth of stabilization and reconstruction missions, counterterrorism operations, and prospective support to civil authorities in homeland security, the demand for combat support and combat service support type capabilities highlights a severe capabilities gap. The need for a new and broader approach to addressing expeditionary and homeland defense missions, as well as more inventive ways of dealing with new partners and Allies, is clear as we approach the next stage in this evolution of Alliance transformation. To meet these challenges, this article proposes the development of NATO Stability Teams.

### Strategic and Capabilities Gaps

The Atlantic Alliance continues to face a gap between its strategic vision of a full range of missions, promoting stability, and the abilities and willingness of member governments to follow through with shared risks, burdens, and responsibilities. In order to maintain Alliance cohesion and effectiveness, it is generally preferable to have the widest possible participation of Allies and partners in major missions. As a result, it is imperative to address capability requirements broadly enough to be comprehensive, while still allowing the fullest participation by individual Allies and partners. To this end, this article suggests a new approach for the Alliance to maximize constructive participation—focusing on the area where global partnering, expeditionary capabilities, and transatlantic homeland security intersect.

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Over the last 10 years, NATO has devised numerous initiatives and programs to address partnering. In response to the immediate post-Cold War demand for Central and Eastern European membership, it crafted the Partnership for Peace (PFP). The PFP program allowed the Alliance to deal with fear of a resurgent Russia and to promote internal reform and democratization among the states of the former Soviet Union. The establishment of the Mediterranean Dialogue in 1994<sup>1</sup> provided the Alliance a mechanism for political and security consultations and for limited practical cooperation with northern African and eastern Mediterranean states. NATO efforts mirrored the European Union's Barcelona Process and the new European Neighborhood programs to effectively incorporate allies and friends under a new structural relationship. Unfortunately, these programs have met with mixed reviews. Tellingly, partners have remarked that they see no measurable improvement in participation, prospects for integration, and especially additional capabilities.

Since the 2002 Prague Summit, the failure of European Allies to improve expeditionary capabilities is especially evident in the areas of strategic airlift; air-to-air refueling; precision weapons; command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C<sup>2</sup>ISR); and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) defenses. The United States and the few European Allies with significant force modernization programs have focused on capabilities which are "high-end technology," expensive, and have acquisition lead times of 10 to 15 years. Identified but often overlooked are the more basic, less expensive, and even more critical combat support/combat service support-type capabilities such as engineering, medical, transportation/trucking, civil affairs, explosive ordnance, and military police. The ensuing security and capabilities gap and the need for a new and broader approach to addressing expeditionary and homeland defense capabilities are key points for the Allies to consider at the Riga Summit in 2006. This article proposes that Act II, the next stage in capability evolution, should be the development of NATO Stability Teams.

### Enlarging the Player Base

NATO Stability Teams (NSTs) would be flexible and mobile teams ranging from 20 to 100 personnel organized to leverage

the comparative advantages of host countries to address humanitarian/civilian/military capabilities requirements. These teams could respond to crisis management scenarios and natural and humanitarian disasters, as well as act as enablers for transatlantic homeland security missions. The development of NSTs would provide a unique venue for NATO to constructively address all three integrating elements of transformation. Simply put, NSTs would allow the Alliance to operationalize partnering, expeditionary efforts, and capabilities, as well as focus on capabilities critical to homeland security operational requirements. The teams would provide a real opportunity for all members, including small Allies, new members, and PFP and Mediterranean Dialogue partners, to make an operational contribution to the Alliance if they choose. NSTs would tailor partnering to emphasize the existing comparative advantages of these members and increase opportunities for their participation in operations, diversifying and enlarging the player base, and eliminating "free riders." In addition, NSTs would utilize light, more easily deployable civilian, humanitarian, and military-type units in the overall mix of capabilities at little to no cost to participating countries, while filling critical security and capability gaps for NATO requirements.

After the less-than-satisfactory result of the Defense Capabilities Initiative, the Prague Capabilities Commitment encouraged members to pursue niche capabilities and a shorter, more focused list of multinational efforts to fill gaps in strategic airlift, air-to-air refueling, precision weapons, C<sup>2</sup>ISR, and WMD defenses. Up to now, the emphasis has been on high technology, long acquisition lead-time capabilities, and, by extension, Allies with a higher level of capability and defense resourcing. However, in addition to the well-known requirements for enhanced capabilities in these high-end areas, many CS/CSS-type capabilities are also critically needed but have received little emphasis. This article considers how less-capable or resource-constrained Allies and partners can contribute to NATO transformation and win public support for their efforts. In short, what factors might motivate these partners to take a lead in developing CS/CSS-type capabilities for specific missions?

Expeditionary operations in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq have shown the importance of support capabilities to a variety of missions. Combating terrorism,

counterinsurgency, peacemaking, and nation-building are all people- and skill-intensive areas where new members and European partners can continue to make significant contributions and a wider circle of partners could provide selected skills. Counterterrorism and information technology security experts, along with critical infrastructure protection specialists, specialized medical facilities, and emergency responders, are fields where European resources generally match or exceed U.S. capabilities.<sup>2</sup>

CS/CSS-type capabilities support peacekeeping, humanitarian and assistance (to include search and rescue operations), and stability and reconstruction missions, and are critical to NATO transformation. Overall, new mixes of Active military, paramilitary, and civilian response forces are required to ensure that transformation can address current and future threats. But in addition to high-technology systems, CS/CSS-type capabilities such as military police, combat and civil engineers, service support units, and transportation units are just a few examples of transformational capabilities that are currently gapped. Highly motivated Allies and partners could provide these critical capabilities that directly support growing NATO, EU, and UN mission requirements.

The Alliance should assist its members and friends in the development of CS/CSS-type capabilities that serve a dual use—that are useful domestically for homeland security and that at the same time complement NATO's high-end expeditionary capabilities. Most if not all CS/CSS capabilities can serve a dual purpose and may be attractive for potential partners to nationally develop and showcase. NSTs can be developed among the less-capable Allies and partners in the following transformation priority areas:

- chemical corps
- military police/constabulary corps
- engineering (construction, etc.)
- medical
- transportation corps
- ordnance corps (demining).

The benefit of developing functional NSTs is based on overall assumptions about NATO and what motivates individual partners. First, the target audience we seek to motivate is new members and partners, including the Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue, and Adriatic Charter

countries. These countries already have CS/CSS-type capabilities to varying degrees, or have indicated a willingness to develop them in support of NATO operations. As a result, NATO will not have to motivate some partners to develop altogether new capabilities, meaning these countries will require no large-scale investment. Third, new Allies can be motivated to participate in peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and search and rescue operations under a NATO, EU, or UN umbrella for a variety of compelling reasons. Motivation can be a promised or enhanced capability or the prospect of international prestige through showcasing a capability. Of course, showcasing an NST capability can have varying motivational effects based on whether having the capability enhances the country's international or Alliance prestige or provides it a more weighted input on coalition operational decisions. Finally, developing and enhancing NST capabilities constructively support NATO transformation goals, which can be a motivator for Allies as well as for candidates for membership or closer association.

These assumptions suggest several benefits a country gains by developing NSTs within the Alliance:

- Having a particular CS/CSS-type capability would allow less-capable or resource-constrained partners with NATO equities to improve their prestige in an area where they have expertise.
- Developing NSTs would enable partners to modernize their force structures a piece at a time, since resource or political constraints preclude substantial modernization in the short term.
- NSTs capabilities have strong domestic utility.

From the Alliance perspective, the benefits of developing NSTs are:

- Teams could reinforce the concept of equal partnership.
- Less-capable or more resource-constrained Allies and partners can make a real contribution and even take a leadership role in a gapped capability for transformation, helping preserve NATO's military relevance.
- NSTs can support all three themes of Alliance transformation, including partnering, expeditionary capabilities development, and transatlantic homeland security enhancement.

The above benefits of developing NSTs lead to a framework for leaders and policymakers to analyze the importance of the specific capabilities to both the Alliance and to individual new Allies and partners. After consulting subject matter experts from RAND, the National Defense University, and the Joint Staff on each CS/CSS capability, we first rated each capability from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest) according to its criticality to specific missions, which we considered as peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance (to include search and rescue), and enablers for search and rescue operations. Using the same scale, we then considered how the capability supports overall transformation goals. We then averaged the criticality factor with the goals under the heading "Importance to NATO." Second, we rated motivational factors for partners according to the 1 to 5 scheme (with 5 being the highest motivation): dual use, international utility and prestige, and support to military transformation at a national level. We averaged these factors under the heading "Importance to Partner."

Comparing the importance of developing CS/CSS-type capabilities to the Alliance and the individual Allies and partners, the capabilities almost always ranked as vital from both perspectives. Only for transportation corps, which scored slightly lower in importance to the partner, was there some divergence. In this exercise, medical ranked the highest of CS/CSS capabilities analyzed, closely followed by engineers/military police, then ordnance corps and chemical corps.

It is important to NATO to focus on the intersection of interests; that is, the long-term impact of initial successes and perceived mutual benefits on enduring and maturing relations between old and new Allies and partners. For example, among the CS/CSS capabilities identified, Romania is strong in military police and engineers. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have a strong engineering tradition. Likewise, Ukraine as a PFP partner is probably strongest in chemical corps and transportation corps. Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia could provide medical, engineering, civil affairs, and ordnance corps units. In addition, even members such as Turkey could benefit from providing engineering and civil affairs teams to the mix. The Alliance should also encourage these partners to combine their CS/CSS capabilities where they want to take the lead in regional NSTs.

The Alliance has expended much political capital either bringing in new countries or developing partner relations and regional capacity. However, NATO needs to consider carefully the kinds of capabilities it intends to ask its newest Allies and partners to provide. The key is to ensure that the partners have an opportunity to positively and actively contribute to ongoing and future missions in a meaningful way, while also filling gapped capabilities and contributing to all three key areas of transformation. This approach has many potential benefits, not least paving the way for contributions at a higher level in the future.

To be fair, there may be drawbacks to the approach advocated here. For example, members and prospective members will more likely be motivated by contributing to transformation goals than will Jordan or Morocco in the Mediterranean or some PFP partners in the Caucasus or Central Asia who are not in the military assistance program. Moreover, there is the question of reliability and commitment of partners to sustain and deploy their contributions to the NSTs, whose capability sustainment and deployment are related to cost and political will, both of which can be inhibitors. However, we believe the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.

As Secretary General George Robertson stated in 2003:

*While none of the invitees possesses spectacular military capabilities, each of them has niche capabilities that will be valuable to NATO. Moreover, they bring an enthusiasm, willingness, if necessary, to take on risks and an appreciation of the value of a permanent transatlantic alliance.<sup>3</sup>*

Encouraging less-capable Allies and partners to take the lead in areas where they have the expertise improves their confidence and prestige, making them more committed. In addition, the development of deployable CS/CSS-type capabilities can spur defense and military reform by setting the example for the remainder of the force structure. Small successes and confidence-building can set the stage for more significant changes and deepen countries' relationships with NATO.

The CS/CSS capability shortfalls identified by NATO mirror U.S. shortfalls. For example, the NST concept aligns with the Building Partner Capacity Roadmap that stems from the Quadrennial Defense Review



(QDR) implementation plan and DOD Directive 3000.05, *Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*. Improving partner SSTR capabilities is a key component. The QDR has endorsed establishing a NATO headquarters for SSTR operations, developing standards by Allied Command Transformation (ACT), integrating planning into the NATO force planning process, and developing metrics to evaluate progress.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Government, particularly DOD, would be well advised to focus bilateral and multilateral security cooperation on developing NSTs, since they fill a security and capabilities gap and can be relatively quick “turn key” operations. Offering partner capabilities gives the United States an opportunity to focus its security cooperation efforts to maximize operational relevance.

### NST Implementation

Recognizing that NSTs fill critical core capabilities, it is important to consider what additional transformation requirements should be applied to the teams before they can integrate into NATO operational missions. The list is relatively short and can be enhanced by exercises, military-to-military training, and inclusion of units in ongoing operations. NSTs will need to adopt Alliance doctrine and procedures, work under existing command and control/deployable headquarters, and be equipped with compatible communications/radios and procedures to share information and operational orders. Countries providing teams will need to develop options for their own lift, from commercial support to more sophisticated development of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet and/or pooling of requirements and assets. While some partners might initially find these challenges daunting, the costs fade compared to the benefits derived from NST participation.

The development and implementation of the NST concept requires a five-step process:

- NATO approves the concept of NSTs at a signing conference, hosted by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in the 2<sup>d</sup> quarter of 2007, and all participants agree to timelines and to clearly establish the way ahead.

- Working groups are established to develop plans for each type of NST. Lead/partner countries are identified at this time.

- A pilot program is created for one functional NST. The team is tested in a well-publicized exercise overseen by ACT.

That would allow the results/lessons learned from the pilot program and way ahead for operationalizing other teams to be reported at the 2008 NATO Summit.

- Other NSTs are tested and readied for deployment in an ongoing NATO operation (possibly in Afghanistan, Africa, or Kosovo) by 2010.

- ACT is tasked to capture lessons learned and make recommendations to the NAC, NATO Allies, and participants on how best to focus appropriate Alliance resources to supplement bilateral contributions.

The timeline to deploy the first NST should coincide with the followup NATO Summit of 2008. Like the development and deployment of the NATO Response Force (NRF), interested Allies and friends should be held to a tight 2-year timeline and encouraged to volunteer forces that could complement NRF, but could also be used independently.

The North Atlantic Alliance faces a historic moment at the Riga Summit in 2006 as it evaluates its progress on transformation. Despite the capabilities initiatives resulting from the 1999 Washington Summit and the 2002 Prague Summit, little capability has actually been delivered.<sup>5</sup> Most military budgets are still flatlined or decreasing, and hard capabilities have a lead time of at least 10 to 15 years in the most optimistic view. Add to this the unrealized expectations of new Allies and friends, the heightened operational out-of-area requirements, and increased terrorism, and the need is clear for a more broad and innovative approach to the transformation issues challenging NATO—global partnering, developing

expeditionary capabilities, and transatlantic homeland security.

The 2006 summit should focus on a few initiatives that are logical extensions of the Prague-Istanbul efforts and grow out of additional cumulative experience in both operations and capacity-building. The NATO Stability Team concept does this and matches Allies and partners who are willing to commit to operations with the specific operational tasks (to include combat as well as stabilization and reconstruction) that need to be done to meet the Istanbul strategic vision: “a full range of missions, promoting stability where it is needed to defend our security and our values.” **JFQ**

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Mediterranean Dialogue countries are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Cordesman, “Rethinking NATO’s Force Transformation,” *NATO Review* (Spring 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Secretary General George Robertson’s forward in *NATO Review* (Spring 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Excerpt from *Quadrennial Defense Review Execution Roadmaps: Building Partnership Capacity*, February 23, 2006, unclassified draft.

<sup>5</sup> As the outgoing Secretary General, George Robertson stated in an interview on January 2, 2004, “Improving the military capabilities of the NATO member countries has to remain the key priority of any Secretary General, because the credibility of the Alliance depends on it having the capability to take actions.”



173<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing (Jennifer Shirat)

U.S. Air Force maintenance crew member reviews schedule for F-15 with Bulgarian officer as part of Joint Contact Team Program